

United States Government

Department of Energy  
Bonneville Power Administration

# memorandum

DATE: June 6, 2002

REPLY TO  
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Supplement Analysis for the Watershed Management Program EIS, (DOE.EIS-0265/SA-80)

TO: Joe DeHerrera - KEWN  
Fish and Wildlife Project Manager

**Proposed Action:** Rangeland Drill/Watershed Restoration and Enhancement in the Grande Ronde Basin.

**Project No:** 1992-026-01

**Watershed Management Techniques or Actions Addressed Under This Supplement Analysis (See App. A of the Watershed Management Program EIS):** 2.7 Avoid Exotic Species; 3.1 Plant/Protect Vegetative/Conservation Cover; 6.3 Control Grazing Intensity; 6.4 Pasture and Hayland Management; 6.12 Vegetation Stabilization: Pasture Planting; 6.13 Vegetation Stabilization: Range Seeding; 6.14 Vegetation Stabilization: Critical Area Planting; 6.15 Vegetation Stabilization: Brush/Weed Management.

**Location:** Various locations throughout the Grande Ronde Basin, Union County, Oregon.

**Proposed by:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and Union Soil & Water Conservation District (Union SWCD).

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The goal of this project is to cost-share the purchase of a rangeland drill and drill seed at least 2,000 acres with native grasses to aid in rehabilitating and revegetating degraded rangelands and pasturelands. The object of the project is to reduce sediment and nutrient inputs to streams by reducing soil erosion on degraded sites and eliminating invasive noxious weeds.

**Analysis:** The compliance checklist was completed by Lyle Kuchenbecker, Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program (GRMWP) Project Planner, and meets the standards and guidelines for the Watershed Management Program Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

BPA proposes to cost-share the purchase of a rangeland drill used to improve the efficacy of seeding by producing more uniform stands of seeded plants, favoring infiltration and moisture storage, offering wind protection, and resulting in the long-term creation of vigorous plant communities. This watershed restoration and enhancement project proposes offering private landowners use of the rangeland drill for re-seeding purposes on degraded rangeland sites, with a target of planting 2,000 acres over a five-year period.

Activities include:

- Purchase a Metalmasters rangeland drill to rehabilitate degraded range and pasturelands within the upper Grande Ronde.
- Stimulate landowner interest in watershed management by offering the rangeland drill for re-seeding purposes on degraded rangeland sites.
- Plant minimally 2,000 acres with native grasses over a five-year period.

There are no ground-disturbing activities associated with this process of long-term weed control through vegetation replacement. The project does not affect aquatic habitat or species and does not involve riparian habitats. There are no land disturbance activities that could affect cultural resources. Individual site assessments would identify erosion problems, rangeland conditions and physical site characteristics. Participating landowners would prepare and submit a Ranch Plan which would establish a long-term grazing strategy for treated lands and is consistent with the Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program Operation Action Plan. Quality control of project plans would be through technical review by the GRMWP Technical Committee and Tri-County Weed Management.

The only known threatened or endangered species present in the project areas are Canada lynx, bald eagle, grey wolf, Snake River Basin bull trout and steelhead, and Snake River spring/summer and fall runs chinook salmon. Project activities would have no effect to listed species. The project would result in improved upland vegetative conditions, which could benefit upland birds and big game.

Proposed Action:	Impacts:
Re-seed vegetation with rangeland drill	Low to no impact. Mechanized seeding methods improve efficacy by producing uniform stands of seeded plants. Project areas are agricultural pasturelands and rangelands where the primary objective is livestock forage production. Project does not affect aquatic habitat or species or riparian habitats. Permits are not required. Vegetation complexes should be self-sustaining.
Monitoring with annual reports and data collection	No impact. Photo-points, Project areas will be monitored by the Union SWCD. BPA reporting requirements are met by the GRMWP reporting process of a project completion report and annual monitoring reports for 5 years (2002-2006). The GRMWP uses the results of the annual monitoring reports to adapt restoration strategies and activities to new information.
Education of landowners	Indirect benefits include the education of landowners to a watershed-based perspective in the upper Grande Ronde. Use of the drill requires a Ranch Plan focused on a long-term grazing strategy. Site-specific vegetation management will be incorporated into the Ranch Plans. Drill seeding reduces the cost per acre of rehabilitation.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the GRMWP Technical Committee and Board of Directors. The Board's representatives include the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, Tribes and local government. The GRMWP Technical Committee is composed of resource

specialists representing the natural resource management agencies in the Grande Ronde Basin. Development of an effective public involvement program includes primary contacts made by the Union SWCD through mailings and workshops designed to solicit landowner participation in the program.

**Findings:** The project is generally consistent with the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program, as well as BPA's Watershed Management Program EIS (DOE/EIS-0265) and ROD. This Supplement Analysis finds that: 1) implementing the proposed action will not result in any substantial changes to the Watershed Management Program that are relevant to environmental concerns; and 2) there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the Watershed Management Program or its impacts. Therefore, no further NEPA documentation is required.

/s/ Patricia R. Smith 6-6-2002

Patricia R. Smith

Environmental Specialist - KEC

CONCUR:

/s/ Thomas C. McKinney

Thomas C. McKinney

NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: 6-6-2002

**Attachments:**

NEPA Compliance Checklist

cc:

Steve Lindley, Watershed Specialist, Union SWCD

Lyle Kuchenbecker, GRMWP Project Planner